

the local Idaho community. Today, the business has expanded to manufacture a full line of automatic rifle products, including rifles, complete uppers, and other parts and accessories. All of Seekins Precision's products are proudly invented, sourced, and made in the USA in their new 25,000 square foot facility, a \$4 million investment back into the community.

At the beginning of this year, Seekins Precision participated in the Shooting Hunting Outdoor Trade, SHOT, Show and Conference in Las Vegas, NV, the largest annual trade show for recreational technology professionals, and the world's premier exposition of combined firearms. Participation in the SHOT Show exposed Seekins Precision to buyers from all 50 States and more than 100 countries, expanding the business' exposure to international markets. Located in the Port of Lewiston since 2010, Idaho's only seaport and the farthest inland port east of the west coast, Seekins Precision relocated to a 25,000 square foot facility in order to accommodate further product demand this past May. The small business received support from Idaho's own Governor, Butch Otter, who attended the grand-opening ribbon-cutting ceremony. Seekins Precision's astonishing success emulates that of the American Dream, reaching beyond the local community and loyal customers.

I congratulate everyone at Seekins Precision on their success, continued growth and exemplary reputation for quality. Seekins Precision represents the best aspects of American craftsmanship and is a credit to both Idaho and the Nation.●

#### GEAR UP HAWAII

● Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, September 22nd marks the beginning of National Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, GEAR UP, Week and I would like to take a moment to recognize the invaluable work of GEAR UP in Hawaii.

For more than a decade, GEAR UP has provided low-income students all over the country with the support and resources they need to go to college. GEAR UP helps these students, many of which are the first in their family to go to college, to overcome the challenges they face in their communities.

GEAR UP Hawaii serves over 16,000 students each year from low-income and underserved communities throughout the State in grades 7 through 12 and in their first year in college. The program provides a number of services to these students including: supporting academic preparation in high school; providing opportunities for early college options; increasing college access and financial aid information to students and families; and supporting students in their first year in college. GEAR UP Hawaii has gained national recognition for its success in closing

the achievement gap and helping low-income students prepare for college.

Through its collaborative partnerships between Hawaii's State Department of Education, K-12 schools, the University of Hawaii, businesses, and community organizations, GEAR UP Hawaii inspires students to see post-secondary education as something they can achieve. It also gives students the tools they need to succeed in college and their careers.

The program's results demonstrate that GEAR UP Hawaii is making significant strides towards increasing the number of low-income students who are prepared for and enroll in college. The first class of Step Up Scholars, a GEAR UP Hawaii program, graduated from high school in June 2013 and earned the college-ready Board of Education Recognition Diploma, BOERD, at nearly twice the rate of the statewide average and three times the rate of non-Step Up Scholars. In addition, across GEAR UP Hawaii schools this past year, there was a 14 percent increase in the number of students participating in dual enrollment programs who graduated high school with six or more college credits. Thanks to these programs, Hawaii's students graduate from high school better prepared for college and for their futures.

A college education is a path to opportunity for our students. GEAR UP Hawaii plays a vital role in fulfilling our responsibility to ensure that every student has access to that path.●

#### TRIBUTE TO WENDY LEWIS

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize LT Wendy Lewis of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps on her upcoming promotion to lieutenant commander.

Lieutenant Lewis is currently serving as a Congressional Fellow on the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. A ship driver by training, Lieutenant Lewis, has ably lent herself to the committee's work. I would like to thank her for the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and other members of the committee.

This well-deserved promotion recognizes her leadership and dedication to serving others.●

#### ADOPTING CHILDREN FROM NEPAL

● Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I comment today on an issue of tremendous concern to a number of Pennsylvania families who in recent years adopted children from Nepal.

In August of 2010, the State Department suspended the authorization for American families to adopt children from that nation with the exception of those families, some from Pennsylvania, who were already in the process of adopting Nepali orphans. The State Department and U.S. Citizenship and

Immigration Services told these "pipeline" families that their cases would be processed to completion, but that they should anticipate significant delays and possibly negative outcomes, since their cases were suspected of being heavily tainted by fraud, corruption, and illegal or unethical practices. In response to U.S. government requests for additional evidence substantiating the legality and morality of these adoptions, these families had to undertake extensive investigations on their own to provide such evidence.

Since these families were already completely bonded with their adoptive children, each of them eagerly undertook its investigation, at great financial and emotional expense. Meanwhile, most of the children were forced to languish for an additional 6 months in orphanages. While due diligence is appropriate for all adoptions, I am deeply troubled that in this case not a single instance of fraud or corruption was ever found. In fact, the State Department and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services ultimately allowed all these American pipeline families bring their children home to the United States. Despite this ultimately successful outcome, the State Department continues to suspend adoption of desperate Nepali children by American families. I ask that the Department reevaluate its policy with the recent experience of the pipeline families as a major consideration.

With an eye towards the future of the children who were adopted by the pipeline families, I am concerned that the public record on these adoptions from Nepal is still replete with references to fraud and trafficking. We need to set the record straight and to make it clear that each of the Nepali pipeline adoption cases in progress at the time of the suspension was ultimately approved and was devoid of any findings of malfeasance. Every child deserves a family and no child deserves to be needlessly haunted by clouds of doubt about his or her origin. These American families deserve to have a positive public record created showing that their adoptions were completely legal and ethical. I wish to personally begin that record today.●

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a treaty which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)